

STAFF REPORT: SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00436

ADDRESS: 1321 LABROSSE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: CORKTOWN

APPLICANT: STEPHEN PECK

PROPERTY OWNER: STEPHEN PECK

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: AUGUST 19, 2024

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: AUGUST 27, 2024

SCOPE: DEMOLISH GARAGE, ERECT GARAGE (WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT APPROVAL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The two-story house at 1321 Labrosse sits mid-block on the south side of the street amongst an intact residential streetscape filled with a mixture of two-story and single-story historic dwellings. Erected prior to 1884, the house fills the width of the lot and is within a few feet of both neighboring houses. Victorian in styling, the front-gabled roof is reinforced by a small projected front-gable roof with detailed corbels that covers a two-story bay. Clapboard siding is the dominant wall material; the triangular portions of the gable walls are covered with fish scale siding, which is also used on the flared wall separating the two bay windows. The windows on the house are wood, double-hung units, and predominately 1-over-1 sash, with an occasional 4-over-4 pattern. The central bay windows have arched tops that echo the fish scale siding pattern.



Staff photos, August 2024.

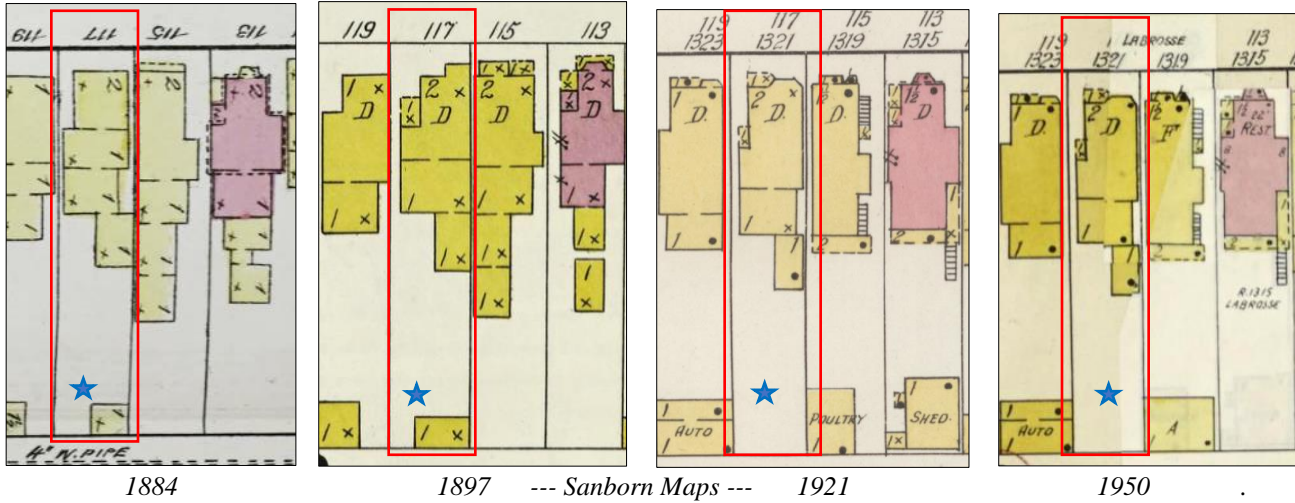
The garage at the rear lot line is a recently built structure (2020 or 2021) that was erected on top of the former garage's foundation. The two-car structure has a steeply pitched gable roof covered with asphalt shingles; vinyl siding covering the walls. Some siding is already visibly deteriorating/loose at the upper left of the overhead door.

PROPOSAL

- Demolish previous garage – occurred in 2020 or 2021.
- Seek approval of existing garage as built.
 - Install one window (JELD-WEN, V-2500 series, 35-1/2” x 59-1/2” vinyl single-hung/full screen, color: bronze) in the gable wall facing the rear yard.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Corktown Historic District was enacted in 1984 and expanded in 1998.
- The Sanborn maps document a single story, wood-framed structure (★)at the alley in the 1884 and 1897 maps, but this structure was gone by 1921. A wood-frame garage was erected in 1967 and was likely the structure demolished in 2020.



BSEED permit card



November 2005 image, EagleView. This is the earliest photo staff found of the former garage.

- Staff compiled aerial photos capturing conditions from 2005 – 2020. The collapse of the garage roof and rear wall is visible in the 2018 image at the far bottom right.



04/15/2016

03/17/2018

03/17/2018 – The March 2018 views show the rear yard-facing gable wall.

04/27/2020

04/27/2020

04/20/2020

These photos clearly capture the demolition and removal of the garage walls and roof.

Aerial view photos, 2005 – 2020, EagleView.

This close-up view appears to show the back/alley-facing wall had fallen inward.



- Reviewing Accela, the Building Department’s permitting system, it appears that complaints with the condition of the property were received by the city, starting in 2010. Staff located comments by city inspectors at two 2017 visits.

- o January 10, 2017 – Inspector Jaafar:

Comment

2-Story, 1FAM, Framed, open to the elements, openings in roof of the rear enclosed porch, not maintained, siding damaged /peeling, front porch cover damaged and about to collapse, garage at rear alley collapsed, overgrowth, rec-DBN

- o September 20, 2017 – Inspector Treanor:

Comment

On CC inspection found frame dwelling occupied with yard clear. Met elderly owner who is selling house this year and believes he has deal. The house is in dilapidated condition, porches, roof, trim, siding and gutters. Garage has mostly collapsed

- Taking into consideration the garage’s 1967 date of construction, it is staff’s opinion the former garage was not a historically significant structure and did not contribute to the historic district. The mostly collapsed structure in 2017, as described by city inspectors, offers evidence to its highly deteriorated condition.
- In 2019, HDC staff received an application for the rehabilitation of the dwelling and the erection of a new garage. Staff approved the rehabilitation of the dwelling, but not the erection of a new garage, as that required HDC review and a public hearing.

CITY OF DETROIT
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

12/4/2019

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

John Biggar
350 Madison
Detroit MI, 48226

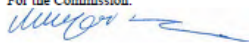
RE: Application Number 19-6555; 1321 Labrosse /Corktown Historic District

Dear Mr. Biggar:

Pursuant to Section 5(10) of the Michigan Local Historic District Act, as amended, being MCL 399.205(10), MSA 5-3407(5)(10); Sections 21-2-57 and 21-2-73 of the 2019 Detroit City Code; Detroit Historic District Commission Resolution 97-01 (adopted August 13, 1997); Detroit Historic District Commission Resolution 97-02 (adopted October 8, 1997); and Detroit Historic District Commission Resolution 98-01 (adopted February 11, 1998), the staff of the Detroit Historic District Commission has reviewed the above-referenced application for building permit and hereby issues a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), which is effective as of December 4, 2019.

Staff finds the following work items, as depicted in the attached renderings, are appropriate because they meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard number 6) *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

- Repair all existing windows. Strip paint down to bare wood, prime and repaint. Install new clear glass in the lights. Install new hardware.
- Where sash is missing, install new wood sash windows to match existing historic sash
- Replace existing asphalt shingle roofing with new asphalt shingles (color grey, brown, or black). Existing wood fascia and soffit will be retained and repaired (where necessary) with new wood to match existing
- Retain and repair the existing historic-age wood door at side elevation
- All the wood siding will have the loose paint removed. Then the wood will be primed and repainted. See the elevations for the color selections from the Historic Color Palette B. Any missing siding will have new wood installed to fill in the holes.
- The front porch will be rebuilt per the original photos. Existing elements to include the porch’s gabled roof with sunburst detailing and all dentils at the porch will be salvaged and reinstalled. The saved elements are to be re-used. A new asphalt shingle roof will be installed on the porch roof. The missing wood columns will be replaced with new 4 x 4 post columns. A new wood porch and steps will be built including a new wood handrail/guard as required by code.
- The side porch will be rebuilt to match the historic photo missing porch to include a “hip-style” roof supported by a single 4x4 post column, new wood porch and steps
- Repair the foundation at the old porch at the rear of the house, install a new wood deck and handrail, steps from grade to porch. Please retain this Certificate of Appropriateness for your files. You should now proceed to the City of Detroit Buildings Safety and Engineering Department to obtain a building permit. The Detroit Historic District Commission’s approval and issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness does not waive the applicant’s responsibility to comply with any other applicable ordinances or statutes.

For the Commission:

Jennifer Ross
Staff
Detroit Historic District Commission

2 WOODWARD, SUITE 806
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226
PHONE 313-224-6536
FAX 313-224-1310

- In January 2020, a building permit application for the rehabilitation of the dwelling (BLD2019-06712) was submitted; HDC approval and the BSEED’s issuance of the permit was granted in February 2020.
- In May 2021, a building permit application was submitted for the erection of a new garage to be placed on the foundation of the previous garage - the 2020 demolition of the previous garage wasn’t noted in the application. The applicant attached the COA for the dwelling rehabilitation as part of its ePlans permit application, but HDC staff flagged the scope of work as needing HDC review at an upcoming meeting. The applicant didn’t go any further with city reviews and the permit application remains “In Review”. However, the garage was erected, and the completed structure was captured in aerial images taken in April 2022.

BLD2021-02647				
RECORD ALIAS NAME Building Permit Application	APPLICATION NAME (PD) Labrosse Garage Addition	STATUS In Review	APPLICANT -	RECORD TYPE Permits/Building/Application/NA
CREATED DATE 05/21/2021	LOCATION 1321 LABROSSE , DETROIT, MI 48216	SHORT NOTES Garage Addition to Project		

Accela cover page for permit application BLD2021-02647 for the erection of a new garage. Permit status is “In Review and indicates a permit has not been issued.



Garage erected without HDC approval. Aerial images, April 2022. EagleView.

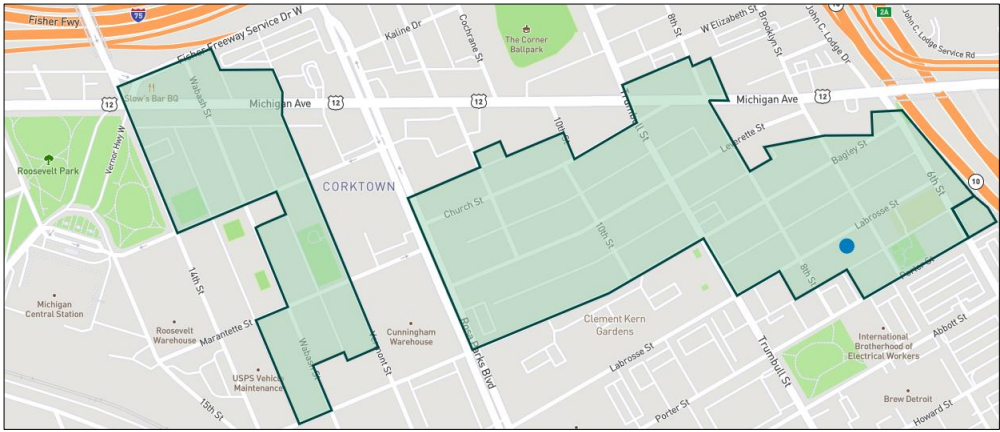
- In July 2024, the current owner contacted HDC staff about interest in installing a window in their garage. It was at this time staff learned of the completed garage and informed the owner that it required HDC review/approval.



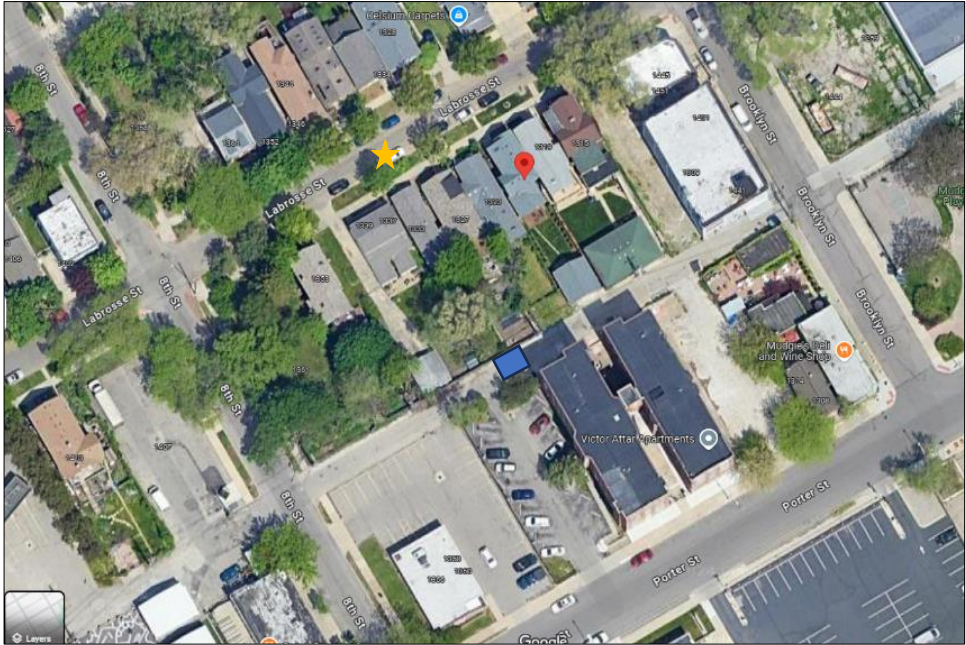
HDC staff photos taken from alley, August 2024.

Above: looking northwest.

Right: looking northeast – ★ identifies dwelling at 1321 Labrosse .



HDC map showing location of 1321 Labrosse (indicated by blue dot) within the Corktown Historic District boundaries.



This Google aerial view shows a mostly intact residential streetscape at Labrosse (★), but an inconsistent garage/alley street wall (■). Also, the environment at the alley expands beyond residential to include industrial and apartment buildings as well as open lots (due to demolitions along Porter Street).



Alley looking east towards Brooklyn Street. Staff photo, August 2024. The garage for 1321 Labrosse faces the rear wall of a historic-age, 4-1/2 story apartment building at 1324-1336 Porter Street.



This photo, looking northeast from the alley, shows the close proximity of the Kaul Glove Company building. Erected in 1917 for the Robert Keller Ink Company, the HDC reviewed an application for the building's rehabilitation in 2021. It is now used as office space for multiple companies.

- The majority of residential buildings on both sides of the block of Labrosse (between Brooklyn and 8th Street) were erected in the 19th century within a dense, mixed-use, walkable neighborhood.
- It is staff's opinion; compatibility of a new garage should take into account the property's dwelling and adjacent alley structures. The erection of automobile garages on this block varies greatly, and at times remains non-existent. Additionally, the nearby multi-floor industrial and apartment buildings, and many vacant lots diffuse the residential character of the alley. Therefore, there is no cohesive garage design/massing.



Before: 2014

After: 2022

- It is staff's opinion, the demolished garage was not historically significant, and its collapsed walls and roof offered confirmation that the structure was deteriorated beyond repair. The erected structure has a compatible massing and design for this property and alley location.
 - The existing garage sits on the former garage's concrete foundation, which fills the width of the lot.
 - The roof has the same forward-facing gable design but was erected with a higher pitch.
 - The centrally placed door on the yard-facing wall is similar, but the wall doesn't have any window openings. The applicant is proposing to install one centrally placed window above the door within the gable area.
- However, the use of vinyl siding and the proposal to install a vinyl window is not compatible with the historic district.
 - Staff notes that the new vinyl siding installation is already failing, consistent with the low quality of those materials.

- New construction and associated materials must be compatible with the historic character of the property, its site, and environment.
- Vinyl windows offer a plasticity and flat/thick appearance that does not adequately match the profile, dimensionality and appearance of historic windows, such as wood. Aluminum-clad wood windows are appropriate for new construction and this rear yard location.
- Vinyl siding is a machine-made product that produces a sheen to the wall surface, rounded edges and a raised grain pattern; these features do not mimic the smooth texture, crisp edged profile and exposure of wood clapboard siding. Wood, or cementitious siding (smooth finish only), both readily available, should be specified.

ISSUES

- It is staff's opinion, through limits of fabrication and material, vinyl windows and vinyl siding are not appropriate for historic districts.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the proposed garage should qualify for a Certificate of Appropriateness, as it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Corktown Local Historic District's Elements of Design.

Staff recommends the Certificate of Appropriateness be issued with the following conditions:

- The vinyl siding will be replaced with wood or cementitious lap siding. If a cementitious product is used, it must have a smooth finish. The wall and trim paint colors will be submitted to staff for review.
- The proposed window will be an aluminum-clad wood product. A cut sheet confirming operation, material, finish and color will be submitted to staff for review.
- The drawings submitted for permit will be revised to show the placement of the proposed window, list the approved siding product and the width of its exposure, and exterior color palette for the siding, trim, and window. The window cut sheet will also be included in the applicant's documents.